AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No. 09/909,988

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A sheet cutter for cutting a sheet piece from a sheet by shearing, the sheet cutter comprising:

a fixed blade;

a movable blade which is movable along the fixed blade; and

an apparatus for estimating a lifetime of the movable blade, comprising

a motor for driving the movable blade;

a detector for detecting a value of a parameter representing a cutting resistance during sheet cutting, wherein the parameter is a value of a current loaded on the motor;

a comparator for comparing the detected value of the parameter with a predetermined reference value, wherein the comparator determines that the movable blade is unfit for use when the value of the parameter exceeds the predetermined reference value; and

an output element for outputting a result based on the comparison;

wherein the movable blade comprises a disk which is rotatably supported, and the receiving element comprises a roller which is rotatably supported.

2. (canceled).

3. (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the detector comprises an ammeter for measuring the value of the current.

4. - 6. (canceled).

7. (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the comparator is included in a microcomputer.

8. (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the output element comprises a visual display.

9. (canceled).

10. (currently amended): A method of estimating a lifetime of a sheet cutter for cutting a sheet piece from a sheet by shearing, wherein the sheet cutter comprises a fixed blade; a movable blade which is movable along the fixed blade; and an apparatus for estimating a lifetime of the movable blade for cutting a sheet; said method comprising the steps of:

(a) detecting a value of a parameter representing a cutting resistance during sheet cutting, wherein the parameter is a value of a current that is loaded onto a motor for driving the cutter;

(b) comparing the detected value of the parameter with a predetermined reference value, wherein it is determined that the movable blade is unfit for use when the value of the parameter exceeds the predetermined reference value; and

(c) outputting a result based on the comparison;

wherein the movable blade comprises a disk which is rotatably supported, and the receiving element comprises a roller which is rotatably supported..

11. - 22. (canceled).

23. (currently amended) The sheet cutter for cutting a sheet piece from a sheet by shearing of claim 1, further comprising a receiving element which receives a sheet piece that is cut off from the sheet, the receiving element being structured so as to be movable together with the movable blade.

24. (previously presented) The sheet cutter of claim 23, further comprising a support for supporting the movable blade and a support for supporting the receiving element, the supports being substantially integral with each other.

25. (currently amended): The sheet cutter of claim ~~1~~23, wherein the receiving element has a groove that receives an edge portion of the piece of sheet which is cut off, which edge portion is in a state in which it hangs down after cutting ~~wherein the movable blade comprises a~~

~~disk which is rotatably supported, and the receiving element comprises a roller which is rotatably supported~~.

26. (currently amended): A sheet cutter for cutting a sheet piece from a sheet by shearing, the sheet cutter comprising:

a fixed blade;

a movable blade which is movable along the fixed blade;

an apparatus for estimating a lifetime of the movable blade, comprising

a motor for driving the movable blade;

a detector for detecting a value of a parameter representing a cutting resistance during sheet cutting, wherein the parameter is a value of a current loaded on the motor;

a comparator for comparing the detected value of the parameter with a predetermined reference value, wherein the comparator determines that the movable blade is unfit for use when the value of the parameter exceeds the predetermined reference value; and

an output element for outputting a result based on the comparison; ~~The sheet cutter of claim 23,~~; and

a receiving element which receives a sheet piece that is cut off from the sheet, the receiving element being structured so as to be movable together with the movable blade,

wherein the receiving element has a groove that receives an edge portion of the piece of sheet which is cut off, which edge portion is in a state in which it hangs down after cutting.